

2.7 Moose Creek Fuel Break, YTA

USAG-AK has proposed to construct a fuel break at the Infantry Platoon Battle Course (IPBC) at Fort Wainwright Army Yukon Training Area (YTA). This project will consist of clearing black spruce on approximately 260 acres north of the Manchu Road in the Moose Creek drainage (Figure 9). The fuel break is intended to minimize impacts associated with fire that can result from military training. The fuel break is designed to mitigate the potential escape of wildfire from the range footprint. In addition, the clearings will give fire fighters an area in which to conduct suppression activities if a fire occurs. This project will also provide Alaska Fire Service (AFS) Personnel with the opportunity to train on fuel break construction and common fire fighting tasks.

The fuel break will be constructed on an existing trail network that divides the area into 4 separate units. Within each unit, approximately 22 polygons, each about 10 acres, will be cleared to initiate a stand conversion from spruce to a less fire prone hardwood species. These polygons will slow the progression of a high intensity crown fire, if one were to occur. This project is located on map quadrangles FAI C1, T. 2 S., R. 3 E. and R. 4 E., and quadrangle XBD C6, T. 2 S., R. 4 E.

Survey and Field Methods

In the summers of 2002 and 2003 the project area for the Moose Creek fuel break project was investigated by archaeological survey crews, employed by the Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands (CEMML, Colorado State University). These crews were supervised by William Hedman (2002) and Nancy Fichter (2003). These cultural resources surveys were part of a survey for a larger range development project. The entire area of potential effect for the fuel break construction project falls with areas previously surveyed in 2002 and 2003.

Parallel pedestrian transects spaced at 10-20 meters were walked in all areas that were not deemed too wet or too steep ($>40^\circ$) to contain cultural material. Systematic sub-surface testing was undertaken in areas determined to be high probability (e.g., lake margins, ridges, benches adjacent to steeper slopes) during initial review of the proposed project area, and as determined by the supervising archaeologist and field crew leader based on survey findings. Shovel tests were approximately 40cm x 40cm, and were screened through $\frac{1}{4}$ " hardware cloth. No cultural resources were located within, or near the proposed project area.

Cultural Resources

There are no known sites located in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Results

Pedestrian survey and sub-surface testing within the current project area did not identify any cultural resources. All other previously recorded archaeological sites or historic properties in the Yukon Training Area fall outside of the proposed project area. USAG-AK determined that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project.

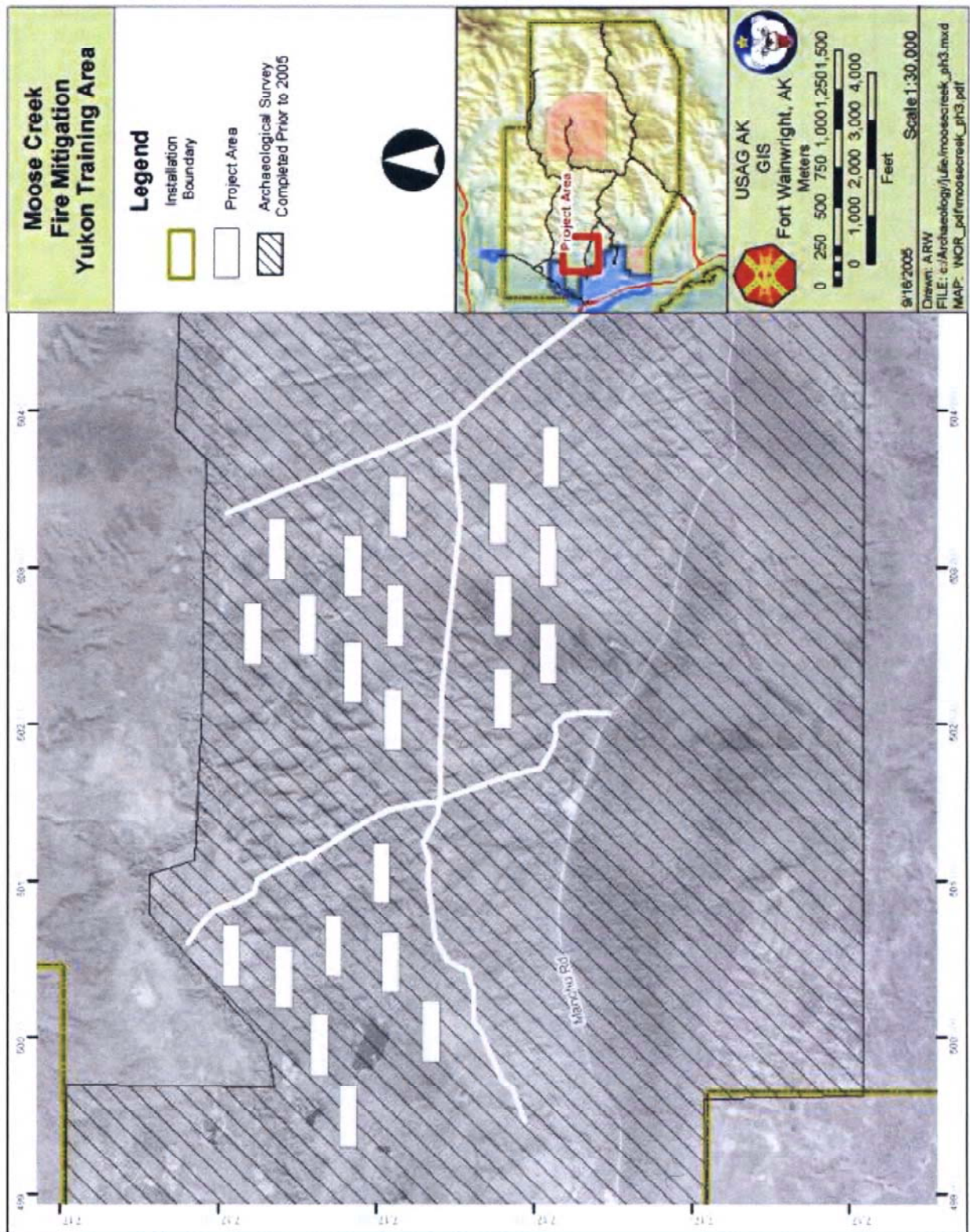


Figure 9. Location of Moose Creek Fuel Break, YTA